

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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DRAFTED BY EA:RBOAKLEY:CCH
APPROVED BY EA:RBOAKLEY
EA/TIMBS:DPSULLIVAN
HA/HR:FSIEVERTS
EA/RA:FBENNETT
S/S -SGOLDSMITH
- ITH

-----043291 260802Z /21

R 250041Z FEB 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 049301

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, MY

SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE COMMITTEE VISIT TO
MALAYSIA

1. ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM HIS FOREIGN OFFICE, MALAYSIAN
AMB ZAIN CALLED ON OAKLEY FEB 21 TO DISCUSS MATTER OF
TELEGRAM HIS EMBASSY HAD RECEIVED FROM AJC (TEXT IN
PARA 5 BELOW). ZAIN SAID THAT HIS FOREIGN OFFICE DID NOT
WISH HIM TO REPLY TO MESSAGE OR MEET WITH AJC OFFICIALS
TO DISCUSS POSTPONEMENT OF VISIT OF IRC TEAM WITH RABBI
TANENBAUM. HOWEVER, GOM DID WISH DEPT OF STATE TO ACT
AS ITS INTERMEDIARY AND TRY TO PERSUADE AJC OF "SINCERITY"
OF GOM, THAT IT IS NOT ANTI-SEMITIC BUT HAS SERIOUS
TEMPORARY PROBLEMS RELATED TO ELECTIONS, AND THAT AJC
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SHOULD NOT PRESS THE ISSUE. DEPT OF STATE COULD TELL AJC
(AND IRC) THAT GOM WOULD BE PLEASED TO HAVE IRC SEND A
TEAM TO VISIT MALAYSIA AT A MUTUALLY CONVENIENT TIME AFTER
THE ELECTIONS AND THAT IRC WOULD NOT BE IN ANY WAY
RESTRICTED IN DECIDING UPON THE COMPOSITION OF THE TEAM.

2. OAKLEY TOLD ZAIN THAT IN OUR JUDGMENT, GOM IS COM-

POUNDING PROBLEM OF IRC AND RABBI TANENBAUM BY REFUSING TO HAVE ITS REPRESENTATIVE DEAL DIRECTLY WITH AJC. WHILE LATTER HAD SENT COPY OF TELEGRAM TO STATE DEPT, WE ARE

NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED. MOREOVER, BY REFUSING TO MEET WITH AJC, GOM TENDS TO REINFORCE RATHER THAN DIMINISH THE IMPRESSION THAT THE REFUSAL TO PERMIT RABBI TANENBAUM TO PARTICIPATE IN PROPOSED VISIT WAS DUE TO SOMETHING MORE THAN ELECTION-RELATED PROBLEMS. WHAT WOULD AJC THINK WHEN TOLD THAT REPLY FROM GOM COULD ONLY COME THROUGH STATE DEPT AND NOT DIRECTLY?

3. ZAIN SAID HE HAD NO AUTHORITY TO DISCUSS MATTER, THAT DECISION OF HIS GOVT IS FIRM NOT TO RESPOND DIRECTLY TO AJC. TO DO SO, IN VIEW OF GOM, WOULD HAVE SIMILAR NEGATIVE EFFECT IN MALAYSIA AS VISIT BY RABBI TANENBAUM WOULD HAVE HAD SINCE IT MIGHT BECOME PUBLIC.

4. OAKLEY ASKED ZAIN TO INFORM HIS GOVT OF THREE THINGS: A) THE APPROACH THEY HAD DECIDED UPON IS A MISTAKE FROM THE MALAYSIAN POINT OF VIEW, FOR REASONS ALREADY EXPLAINED HERE AND BY AMBASSADOR MILLER IN KUALA LUMPUR AND IT IS LIKELY THAT AJC WILL REACT NEGATIVELY; B) GOM SHOULD RECONSIDER HAVING ZAIN CONTACT IN SOME WAY A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE AJC, INCLUDING PERHAPS RABBI TANENBAUM, TO EXPLAIN GENERAL POSITION OF CONFIDENTIAL

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GOM IF NOT TO REPLY TO TELEGRAM; C) WE WILL CONVEY MESSAGE TO AJC AND IRC, BECAUSE USG ATTACHES IMPORTANCE TO MALAYSIA BUT WILL IN NO WAY BE RESPONSIBLE FOR OUT-COME; NOR WILL THIS INHIBIT US FROM MAKING A PUBLIC COMMENT CRITICAL OF GOM IF ISSUE SHOULD BECOME PUBLIC.

5. TEXT OF AJC TELEGRAM TO ZAIN FOLLOWS;

QUOTE: THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE VIGOROUSLY PROTESTS THE ACTION OF YOUR GOVERNMENT IN BARRING FROM YOUR COUNTRY RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM, NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF OUR INTERRELIGIOUS AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT, WHO HAS BEEN PART OF AN INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE MISSION STUDYING THE PLIGHT OF INDOCHINESE REFUGEES.

THE CONTENTION THAT RABBI TANENBAUM'S VISIT WOULD INTERFERE IN YOUR COMING ELECTIONS ON ITS FACE IS ABSURD SINCE THIS IS A HUMANITARIAN EFFORT COMPLETELY APART FROM ANY POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS. IF YOUR GOVERNMENT DOES NOT DISAVOW THIS ACTION, IT WILL BE GUILTY OF EXPLOITING A HUMANE CAUSE FOR PURELY POLITICAL PURPOSES AS WELL AS VIOLATING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF ONE WHO HAS DEVOTED A LIFE-

TIME TO SUCH CAUSES. A COPY OF THIS PROTEST IS BEING
SENT TO THE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT. RICHARD MAASS,
PRESIDENT. VANCE

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
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Draft Date: 25 feb 1978
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TAGS: SHUM, MY, IRC
To: KUALA LUMPUR
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